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ABSTRACT

The need for community involvement in a teacher training program is stressed in this monograph. The paper is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the historical view of community involvement in decision-making matters pertaining to education and the growing trend toward a concept of many levels of citizen participation in education. The second is concerned with identifying one university's struggle with the question of defining its role as an urban university and determining within the framework of the definition the most productive ways in which its teacher education program can relate to the community. The third section describes the development of an experimental school which gives high priority to community involvement and the relationship of the University to this school. Concluding comments offer proposals as to the ways teacher education programs can assume a more active leadership role in helping school systems expand some of the experimental concepts noted in this monograph. A 23-item bibliography is included. (Author/MJM)

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND TEACHER EDUCATION: ONE EXPER

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PREFACE

This paper began as an attempt to pull together some of my professional and personal knowledge and experiences as a social worker, a teacher, a citizen active in educational movements, and a parent in regard to issues relating to citizen participation in education. The ultimate goal of this effort is the enhancement of the educational experience of teachers. Such an attempt on a topic of such endless complexity required a tremendous amount of delimitation. One could so easily write volumes on the topics of urban education, the philosophy of education in American society, citizen participation, changing institutional systems, especially a university system, and/or the sociological and political implications of change. I have attempted to deal with these themes in only a very cursory way, making use of the literature in the fields of education, sociology, social work and psychology.

The effort in this paper was to develop a practical monograph for use by educators in institutions of higher learning who are committed to the training of teachers for community involvement. It is hoped that in this way some of the ideas to which I have been exposed may begin to penetrate higher education and public education. A look at one university's involvement with a rather unusual public school and the significance for teacher education form the core content of this paper.

I am grateful for the assistance of Dr. Evelyn R. Fullbright, Chairman of the Department of Elementary Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, Dr. Martha Hamilton, Assistant Professor, Department of Elementary Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, Mrs. Barbara Wurtzel, parent leader in the Cary School development, and Mrs. Marcia Brown, former coordinator of volunteers for the Cary School.

INTRODUCTION

The perspective adopted in this paper is that a teacher training program for community involvement must reflect a recognition and acceptance of the concept of citizen participation in education and educational issues as vital and must show an incorporation of such theory in its curriculum. Further, a university training teachers for community involvement roles must, itself, relate to the community of which it is a part and define its mission in terms of that community.

This paper is divided into three sections. The first is a discussion of the historical view of community involvement in decision-making matters pertaining to education and the growing trend toward a concept of many levels of citizen participation in the field of education. These ideas are viewed within the context of theory and knowledge on institutional change. The second is concerned with identifying one university's struggle with the question of defining its role as an urban university and determining within the framework of the definition the most productive ways in which its teacher education program can relate to the community and educate teachers for community involvement. The third section describes the development of an experimental school which gives high priority to community involvement, and the relationship of the University to this school.

Concluding comments offer proposals as to the ways by which institutions with teacher education programs can assume a more active leadership role in helping school systems expand some of the experimental concepts noted in this paper throughout the system, and how they can adopt the kind of curriculum within the university which assures students of the knowledge, attitudes and skills to work in such schools.

The bibliography used in the development of this paper is suggested as a useful resource guide to some of the recent literature on changing institutional structures, urban education and citizen involvement.

This paper aims to define and describe the concept of the innovative approach to improving teacher education as it relates to the ever growing challenge of the need for the

training of teachers in community involvement. Such an innovative approach requires what Alvin C. Eurich has called an innovative spirit. He stated in his recent book, *Reforming Education,*

> "The innovative spirit seeks improvement in every aspect of teaching and learning. It questions accepted ideas and is open to new ones. It recognizes that the educator's job is not merely to sustain and maintain the educational enterprise—whether it is a classroom, a school or college, or an entire educational system—but to change it for the better. The innovative educator strives to maintain an open system—open classrooms, open schools, an open administration—open to new ideas, to public and professional scrutiny, to correction of inevitable flaws and abuses.[1]

Of course, the reality of the situation is that schools, colleges and educational systems have, by and large, not developed such an innovative approach on a planned basis as it relates to teacher training for community involvement. However, as protests and advocacy for change have come from other sources for community schools, decentralization of school districts, experimental programs, and parent involvement, some colleges and universities have begun to respond to these forces for change in their training of teachers.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Historically, the community's role in the affairs of school policy and control has been one of a general lack of participation. The picture in most American communities is that the consensual elites control education and in so doing place both minorities and the masses of the majority at a disadvantage. In the last two decades there has been some emphasis in school administrations on broad citizen participation in school affairs, but in many instances citizen participation has meant only the participation of those sympathetic to the school board or school administrator. The participation of minority groups and more people generally in educational decision-making is long overdue and changes are being made in some American communities. Citizen participation is a dual force which attempts to involve and accommodate citizens to the demands of urban society, while at the same time pressure institutions to better adopt to the needs of their constituencies.

With this new view toward citizen participation, one of the important questions for institutions of higher education becomes that of determining how to prepare teachers who can function effectively, not only as an instructor and curriculum material developer, but also as a liaison with the community.

The first dilemma becomes that of changing the university as a system so that it is open to that kind of innovative spirit which will allow for the adoption of new programs, new teaching methods, and a new philosophical stance on teacher education. This is a tremendous hurdle, and it was one of the themes commented upon repeatedly by faculty members and students who were interviewed in preparation for the writing of this paper.

On the point of institutional change, James Herndon, in his recent book, *How To Survive in Your Native Land,* made this cryptic comment, "Change! An institution can only be changed in the same way that a mountain is changed by highway engineers into a pile of dust. No institution, once invented, has ever ceased to exist. Nor has any institution ever changed, except according to the exigencies of time . . . Not changed, only adopted . . . So it is that institutions don't change, but people do.[2] Such a change by a growing number of people teaching in schools of education in colleges and universities and by consumers who are demanding a different kind of role for educators and for themselves is leading to some of the innovative programs being introduced into the curricula of schools of education.

The question being asked over and over again by educators and the lay public focuses on what it means to be educated and to be an educator. According to Silberman, to be educated—to be an educator—is to understand something of how to make one's education effective in the real world. It means to know something of how to apply knowledge to the life one lives and the society in which one lives it.[3] How then, do universities change their teacher-education programs so as to assure that students are gaining knowledge, attitudes, and skills which are firmly rooted in day to day human experiences.

In more direct language, what is being proposed is that all universities where future teachers are being prepared should take more than a cursory look at whether or not they are training quality teachers for *urban schools.* The fact is that we live in an era when the majority of the population resides in urban centers. Since this is the case, what are the implications for teacher training? Larry Cuban has proposed a teacher-education model with the thrust being the shift of the center of gravity from the university to the classroom and community.

The model contains four basic components:

> First, an enormous body of knowledge on child growth, the learning process, urban sociology, ethnic history, race relations, and languages of the city must be assimilated. Second, the process of re-evaluation of personal attitudes and the development of increased self-awareness must begin. Third, classroom and community must be the crucible of training where this knowledge, skill, and self-awareness have an opportunity to be applied, modified, and further created. Last, competent supervision from practitioners, academicians, and community residents who are involved in schools must be always accessible to trainees.[4]

Community involvement may be viewed from a wide range of definitions. *There does not seem to be a "right" way of community involvement.* It relates to the manner in which schools (teachers and administrators) develop and maintain close and intimate relationships with the community in which they are located. This is based on the premise that educators need to understand the communities in which their schools are located since students reflect the social environment in which they live. Community involvement also means the degree to which emphasis is placed on citizen participation in decision-making on educational matters. That is, to what extent do parents control the educational policies and administrative responsibilities of the school. The school decentralization controversy in New

York City is an excellent example of the dramatic nature of this element of community involvement.[5] Community involvement further means the extent to which community resources are used in the educational process. Is the community viewed as the laboratory for teaching and is the total community encouraged to support the school? Community involvement also denotes the extent of parent involvement in the daily operation of the school. This concept is reflected in the use of parent volunteers in the school in such activities ranging from the distribution of milk to serving as a specialized teacher in a given area of expertise.

Within the context of this paper, community involvement is being viewed from all of these levels. Again, there does not seem to be any "right" way to community involvement. The diversity in approaches to training for community involvement probably reflects the diversity of America's 20,000 or so school districts, and indicates that effectiveness in relation to community involvement is in terms of how any individual school can be both in a community and of it.

In looking at some of the new programs, one is struck mainly by the difference in degree of community involvement for which school personnel is being trained. In some institutions personnel is being trained to work with the new district boards and community schools of decentralized school districts in what are being called community controlled schools. At the other end of the spectrum, the community component stresses methods of developing understanding and rapport with the parents and children of the school. The institution assumes here that involvement of the community in school affairs is satisfactorily achieved through the usual methods of central school boards and PTA groups. Ranging along this scale are a diverse number of programs encouraging community involvement in specially Federally funded projects, involvement with experimental schools, use of community resources in training programs, interdisciplinary training of teachers within the university, development of satellite schools within the university, etc.

The approach of any given institution in the training of teachers for community involvement has to relate to the broad goals and objectives of teacher education in relation to the needs of society and the kind of society we want to have, and must also reflect the particular mission of the university in question.

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY, RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

Virginia Commonwealth University was created by Act of the General Assembly of Virginia on July, 1968, through merging the Medical College of Virginia and Richmond Professional Institute. This merger grew out of the recommendations of a report by a state commission (The Wayne Commission), which had been charged with the task of determining the need for an urban university for the Richmond area. An urban university and the hopes for VCU were described in that report in the following manner:

> "A university is a living, evolving institution which must continually review its role if it is to serve effectively the society of which it is a part." "Rarely has any university been accorded a more timely opportunity to confront on an intellectual and practical level the social environment which surrounds it."[6]

In his inaugural address on November 10, 1970, the first president of the university defined an urban university as one with special educational benefits. An urban university has a responsibility to:

1. Provide special programs for those working on urban problems.
2. Teach how to live more effectively in the urban environment.
3. Offer special material to make students aware of urban problems.
4. Provide a faculty with expertise in a wide variety of relevant specialities.
5. Furnish a large group of dedicated volunteer workers: faculty, students, and staff.
6. Provide health care to large numbers of the residents of Richmond and most of Virginia.[7]

Within the framework of this challenge, the School of Education, and specifically the Department of Elementary Education, responded in a number of ways. It participates in a joint project with other colleges in the area in a Teacher Corps Program in which participants receive a significant amount of training in the community. As is true in many universities, Federal funding has given impetus to many new educational programs wherein community involvement is an essential component of the program. There are course offerings with curriculum content on urban education. There is a special interdisciplinary seminar focusing on resources available in the community and making use of the resource leaders in the teaching. The School of Education is involved in a joint venture with five other schools in the university in the development and operation of a Day Care Center to serve residents of the community as well as the university faculty and students. Parents are serving on the Board of Directors of the Center.

Planning is underway for the teaching of the theory courses in the public schools and the development of satellite schools for teacher training in cooperation with the public school system. Recently, there was a joint faculty appointment between the University and the public school system for the provision of leadership to a local innovative school program and the training of teachers in such schools. These two developments will be discussed in more detail later in the paper in relation to John B. Cary School.

These various moves point to the fact that there is movement from a passive position regarding teacher training for community involvement to a goal of a total commitment to a diversified approach toward community involvement. The Department of Elementary Education seems to be in a transitional stage at this time, with innovative leadership for change being assumed by a few people who are aiming to help other people look at new approaches to training teachers.

The University, the School of Education, the Department of Elementary Education are all dealing with the questions of change, the role of the urban university, and the concept of consumer participation. They are struggling to meet the challenge posed by Birenbaum in his cogent statements about the urban university. He stated, "I believe that the experience of being *in* a city and *of* it is an essential part of the higher learning now. Great cities

naturally inspire great universities, and it will become increasingly difficult for institutions of higher education to be great apart from the urban environment."[8]

The description which follows is a more detailed account of the involvement of the School of Education, VCU, particularly the Department of Elementary Education, in the creation of a model public school in the City of Richmond, and the on-going relationship of the University to that school in its teacher training program.

JOHN B. CARY SCHOOL

In September, 1969, a model school, John B. Cary School, was opened in Richmond, Virginia, as an experimental school of the Richmond Public School system. The establishment of this school was the result of over two years of planning and continuous work on the part of parents, the School Board, the State Department of Education, the School of Education of Virginia Commonwealth University and many, many other community leaders. One of the goals of the school was that it was to be a "learning environment" not just for children but also for parents, teachers, administrators and the whole community.

One of the most crucial aspects of the new school was the kind of innovative educational program attempted in terms of curriculum and the role of the child in his own learning. Of equal significance, however, were the concepts of parental involvement, involvement of the school in the community, and the relationship of the community to the school. Some of the early statements made in this connection were:

> "The more a school becomes actively related to the community at large, the more relevant will its functions seem to the children.
>
> . . . A learning environment should include every facet of the community and draw on business, university, industry and laymen with skills of innumerable sorts.
>
> . . . There should be much exploration of the local community—socially, physically, politically—bringing resources to the school and children out of the school to the resources. There should be maximum opportunity for participation, not just for observation.
>
> . . . Cary needs parents who are excited about "learning about learning." Parents who are not "turned off" but "turned on" to the possibilities at Cary School for their children, themselves and the City of Richmond.
>
> . . . Every parent is important at Cary and every parent has something to offer. Part of the Cary "experiment" is to discover how best to use the resources of parents and the community. One thing children at Cary will learn is how caring adults work together to solve problems!"[9]

In the creation of this school there could be seen in full operation those diverse forces which have been causing dramatic changes on the educational scene in America. The ills which afflict cities everywhere in the United States were problems for Richmond as well. A university training teachers with a commitment to urban education was attempting to better understand what its mission should be, and was beginning to make an effort to relate itself more meaningful to the community in which it is located. Parents were concerned about the kind of education their children were receiving and wanted more voice in decision making and more input into the school their children were to attend.

A few brief comments about Richmond at that time (1968), will point up the fact that the social milieu was such that it impelled innovation in the educational system. The city was approximately fifty percent Black with a school population of over sixty percent Black. On the elementary level, most of the children were attending all-Black ghetto schools. Re-segregation was taking place in many of the desegregated schools. Power regarding educational matters rested with a central school board composed of five members appointed by the City Council. Two of these were Black, however, neigher had children in the public schools, and both were from the Black middle class community. Many white parents were expressing dissatisfaction about the rigidity and conformity in the schools, and the lack of parental involvement allowed. Criticisms were being hurled at the new superintendent of schools claiming that he showed lack of vision and was racist in his views.

Thus, it was a group of concerned parents who made the initial response to some of these conditions by proposing that the model school serve as an innovative social system as well as educational system. It was proposed that the school should represent the heterogeneity of the larger society. It was the contention of the group from the outset that the school should prepare children intellectually and morally for responsible citizenship, and in order to do so it must not only permit, but take advantage of and cherish diversity in the social, economic, racial and ethnic background of its pupils. Therefore, a primary goal in the establishment of the school was for a diverse student population representative of all segments of the city.

Parents related in numerous ways to many of the above noted situations. To spell them out would be far beyond the scope of this paper, but it can be said that they were significant in terms of citizen participation leading to change in the existing school system. Appearances at School Board meetings, addressing City Council, forming coalitions with other groups, meeting with school administrators, and studying other communities' programs were just a few of the tactics used leading to the creation of the Cary School and other changes throughout the school system.

The relationship of parents and the local school administration to the University was significant and timely. The University played a vital role in making input into curriculum development. Faculty members from the School of Education served on a number of planning committees. Later, they became members of the Advisory Board of the School which consisted of parents, teachers, school administrators, and representatives of the State Education Department. From the very beginning, many efforts were made to effect the appointment of a director of the new school with some financial responsibility assumed by the University. This did not materialize until the Fall, 1971, at which time a joint appointment was made of a person devoting one-half time to the University and one-half to the Public School System. This faculty member's involvement in the teacher training program of university students at the Cary School, and another new school since established, forms a vital link between the University and the Public School System.

Other ways in which the University has related to the school have included the recruitment of student volunteers for specialized activities, use of university faculty for in-service teacher training programs, and use of university-wide faculty for special courses at the Cary School. Since the opening of the Cary School, the extent of parent involvement at all levels of operation of the school has been unbelievable. Thus, teachers and teacher trainees have been exposed to an approach which is far different from the traditional one in the public school in regard to parental participation. Some examples follow which illustrate this.

The concept of PTA was broadened to the extent that two bodies were formed as advisory groups on policies and program and as action bodies for necessary change. The two groups were the Parent Council, composed only of parents, and the Advisory Board, consisting of parents, teachers, university representatives, officials of the public school administration, and a representative from the State Department of Education. The Parent Council focused primarily on intraschool issues, whereas the Advisory Board was concerned more with such matters as educational goals of the school, leadership for the school, relationships with the School Board and administration, and community relations. Parent members of the Advisory Board were involved in such activities as appearing before City Council for school budget hearings; attending school board meetings; serving with teachers and administrators on a selection committee for a principal of the school and interviewing candidates; securing community resources (funds and volunteer manpower) for the school; working with other Board members in the planning and conducting of teacher training workshops; negotiating with city officials and officials of the local bus company for transportation to the school so as to insure a student body from all sections of the city.

Naturally, there was some overlapping, duplication, and lack of communication between the two groups, as well as some conflict of interests on the part of some of those serving on the Advisory Board. However, these were problems of a different nature which did not hamper the extent of parent involvement. One of the deterring factors was in terms of the nature of the legitimacy of the group (Advisory Board). The parent members of the body were appointed by the School Board, thereby raising questions as to the extent to which they could direct action against the very Board which appointed them! Seemingly this resulted in fewer problems than one might imagine, probably due to the persistence, tactfulness and diligency on the part of the parents.

It may be helpful to point out that the issue in the particular city being described was never one of community control of the school, but rather of citizen participation and influence on change within the existing system. Constant pressure at those points of decision-making seemed to have been the most successful strategy. Of course, there were many frustrations and a number of failures, but the gains have by far outweighed the set-backs. Of major significance was the establishment of the concept of parental participation as an accepted part of the decision-making process, even if the decisions made were not always those supported by the parent group.

The role of volunteers in the daily program of the school has been another vital aspect of the nature of citizen participation at Cary School. Under the supervision of a coordinator of volunteers (a parent), parents have engaged in a wide variety of activities. The principal, teachers and teachers in training have viewed this as an expected phenomenon of inestimable value, and not one to be looked upon as a bother.

Parents are a part of the daily life of the school within the classroom as well as participating in such familiar things as going on field trips and serving as room mother. For example, parents can be found in the classrooms working with individual children on special projects, serving as the teacher in a particular curriculum area if the parent has special talent and skill in this area, leading the class discussion and helping the children to raise questions which relate to their total living experiences, and assisting the teacher in researching a particular subject when the teacher would not be able to do such on the spur of the moment.

Another aspect of parent involvement has been in securing needed materials and supplies for the schools. Parents have not been shy in requesting items from neighborhood stores, residents, other parents, small businesses, and million dollar corporations! The school newspaper, for example, is written and produced in a professional style by two parents of the school with contributions from all parents and is printed on paper furnished by a local business firm. A computer service was furnished to the school by a local business. Televisions, typewriters, tape recorders, and other audio-visual materials are often donated by businesses.

The use of the community (neighborhood) and the city-at-large as a living laboratory for learning through walking tours and trips to the museum, city governmental agencies, parks, businesses, State Capitol, etc., has been an exciting part of the Cary program for children, parents and teachers. Parents have played an instrumental part in helping children and teachers bridge some of the gaps of racial and class differences. Parents with different cultural backgrounds have shared some of their experiences with children in the classroom; other parents have taken into their homes for visits and discussions children with a different life situation from their own; parents have talked among themselves about their own attitudes toward race, class, and ethnic differences. Prejudices and racism die hard, but the atmosphere at Cary remains one in which integration is the more obvious social situation rather than re-segregation, as has been the pattern in so many desegregated Southern school systems.

People have been and remain the most important community resource used by the school. People from all walks of life who are as diverse as the population of the school have come into the lives of the children at Cary School. A Black college student who is an authority on Indian lore, a white retired teacher who knows more Black history than most Blacks, a Jewish businessman who prides himself on being the best amateur photographer in town, professors from the local universities (in music, art, journalism and science), a social worker who was always good in library work, a doctor who is world renowned in his field, the neighborhood mother who bakes better

cookies than any bakery ever could, a poor white mother who faced some of her prejudices by serving as a roommother in an integrated class, the Governor of the State and his wife—these are just a few of the people who have volunteered their time, talents and enthusiasm toward making Cary School a community school in the broadest concept of the term.

TEACHER TRAINING FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

How does Virginia Commonwealth University's urban mission and the establishment of John B. Cary School with heavy parental involvement have meaning for a teacher education program with a commitment to community involvement?

As noted earlier in the discussion of the goals of the Department of Elementary Education, implementation of the commitment of the Department to community involvement in its curriculum and its own relationship to the community is far from a reality even though significant gains have been made. Basically, there needs to be a general thrust from the Department in identifying its role in urban education and adopting an attitude favorable to institutional change, although beginning steps have been taken in this direction.

Another area observed as requiring attention include curriculum content. Curriculum content is lacking on urban sociology, racial and ethnic content, personal attitudes and human relationships. Much more involvement in service programs to the community is seen as a need. A greater use of the total community as a living laboratory and use of community people in teaching would enhance learning for community involvement. A Department stance toward a philosophy of education espousing community involvement and preparation of teachers for work with inner city students and schools would give impetus to change. All of these elements are part of the proposed model for a university teacher education program committed to changing its training to one which prepares teachers for the triple interlocking roles of instructor, curriculum material developer, and liaison with the community. The latter role is just beginning to be viewed as a necessary support to the other two, in the sense that experiences in the community inevitably help shape the teacher's decision-making roles in instruction and in the development of curriculum materials.[10]

The movement of the VCU Department of Elementary Education to use the Cary School as the center of its field experience for teacher trainees is a most meaningful step toward the implementation of a community involvement approach. A course in curriculum development and methodology is being taught in a community school with heavy parental involvement preceding the actual teaching by the student in the classroom. This class meets five days a week for eight weeks at Cary School, the beginning of each semester. The guiding theme of the course is that curriculum development should take place in interaction with the school, making full use of all the dynamics of parental involvement, community resources, and understanding of the social situation from which the children come. The majority of these students then move to student teaching at Cary School. The focus in this situation is on the development of curriculum, via the experiences coming out in the classroom, which makes use of and responds to the total life situation of the children. Student teachers are working with parents right in the classroom, they are initiating activities geared toward full use of parent participation, they are meeting with individual parents, they are making use of community resources, they are attending meetings of the parents' organization. In short, they are observing, participating in and experiencing all the many diverse levels of community involvement which were described earlier as the bulwark of Cary School. They are catching the excitement of the teachers who are working in the program, and this is the great leverage for change!

One of the thrilling aspects of this involvement by the University at Cary is the fact that some of the ideas and philosophy of that school are spreading within the University and being incorporated in other parts of the teacher training program. Now, there is a one day exposure for students in their junior year of college to an observational experience at Cary or Bellvue School (a newly formed experimental school). Other faculty members responsible for student placement are beginning to place students in these schools and are showing interest in the kind of program at Cary by visiting the school and indicating a desire to teach classes in the school or some other public school. Students are beginning to ask for other courses geared toward preparing them for teaching in such a school as Cary. They are excited by this new approach, but at the same time fearful of what will happen when they go into a traditional school. Of course, the hope is that as more students are exposed to more innovative approaches in teaching, they will ultimately change the Public School System!

Other important features of this joint university-public school system relationship have been in terms of the spreading of ideas from Cary School to other parts of the system and the community-at-large. The superintendent of schools has expressed his strong support for maintaining the relationship with VCU for the training of teachers with full use of Cary School and other experimental schools. Many teachers from other schools observe at Cary, talk to parents and hear from the principal the strong emphasis on parental involvement. The professor who jointly works for the University and the School System has been encouraged by the superintendent of schools to spread the concepts of the Cary program into the total system. Plans are underway for the development of a film which will tell the story of citizen participation and innovative education at Cary School.

The parallel questions heard from the participants on each side in this educational venture are, "Are the public schools ready for the innovative teacher?" and "Why don't the universities prepare teachers for teaching in community schools?" The answers will only come when both the universities and the public schools jointly make a reality in deed out of the words which often are so glibly spouted. The Cary School–VCU venture is an example of such a reality. The ultimate test of the deed will come in an

evaluation of the degree to which this kind of educational training program becomes established as a part of the university system and the extent to which other teachers and public schools in the City incorporate such ideas into their own style of teaching as well as the institutional structure of the school.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Of essence in dealing with the theme of community involvement and teacher education is the concept of change. Such a proposition as training teachers for community involvement requires changing many traditions and attitudes about citizen participation and the role of citizens in educational affairs. It further calls for changing the structure and content of training programs from those centered in colleges with heavy emphasis on out-moded theory to programs which are community oriented and theoretically based on the lives of the children being taught and the real world in which they live.

When change does occur it is often incremental and goes unnoticed, but on deeper study is reflective of an innovative spirit and a lot of hard work on the part of a few individuals. The real test of the value of such change is when the spirit spreads and what has once been innovative becomes a part of the system. In other words, the success of any experimental program, once it has been tested out as being of high quality, is the extent to which it is adopted into new, expanded, or permanent programs.

The social conditions of contemporary America require an educational system which is responsive to urban life. If teacher education programs are to prepare teachers for such school systems there is the need for much more attention to the life experiences of city children. Closely related to this, is the need for a better understanding on the part of the teacher as to who he is and how he relates to those children and their families who may be different and who may hold different values. Thus, dealing with questions of attitudes and values needs to be as much a part of teacher education as imparting knowledge and teaching skills.

Parental involvement in a school and school involvement in a community can take many different shapes and forms. Essential at any level is a respect on the part of educators for the necessity of citizen participation, not only as a philosophical must in a democratic society, but as recognition of the educational value derived from the contributions made by parents and other citizens in the educational process. Actually, it is a recognition that learning does not begin and end in a classroom with one teacher between the hours of nine and three o'clock.

The Cary School experiment clearly points to the possibility of making use of parents and other volunteers from all walks of life and not just the elite, middle and upper-middle class groups. It is true that many leadership positions were assumed by those middle-class parents with more available time. However, in numerous other ways in the work of the PTA, in Saturday and evening parent workshops, in planned activities known about in advance, in securing and providing supplies to the school, many parents participate in the life of the school who are often spoken of as not caring or not having the time to be involved. The essential part of this widespread involvement is the attitude of the principal and teachers in encouraging and seeking out help from all the parents.

Community involvement in public education *is necessary, is possible,* and *is happening.* If institutions of higher learning are to prepare teachers for this reality of American education, they must begin with a philosophical stance in support of such and move toward the development and implementation of a curriculum which trains teachers for community involvement.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Eurich, Alvin C. *Reforming American Education.* New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

[2]Herndon, James. *How to Survive in Your Native Land.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.

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